MARJORIE LIU

SANA TAKEDA

image

34

MONSTRESS™

THE STORY SO FAR...

It's a family affair in the walled Arcanic city of Ravenna. After a painful reunion with her secretive old friend, Tuya, and a tense first meeting with her aunt, the Warlord, Maika Halfwolf summoned her grandmother, the Queen of Wolves, to join them all in Ravenna's scarred streets. Tensions remained high as the Warlord learned the truth about Constantine, Maika finally acknowledged Tuya's roles as both the Baroness of the Dusk Court and the Warlord's wife, and the Wolf Queen tried to negotiate with her old enemy, Zinn, the Monstrum inside Maika's body.

But no one was prepared for what would come next. As the human army regrouped outside Ravenna, they were assisted by the Cumaean Yvette Lo Lim, who provided them with a gas harvested and weaponized from the bones of a dead Monstrum. As it had in Pontus before, the gas immediately drove many of Ravenna's Arcanics to cannibalistic insanity – and it transformed the Ancient Wolf Queen into something far more dangerous.

THE PLAYERS...

MAIKA An Arcanic teen who survived the Great War, and slavery at the hands of the Cumaean witch nuns. Ruthless and haunted, she is determined to uncover the truth behind her mother's murder — and her mother's secrets — in the hope that she can free herself from an ancient and dangerous god called a Monstrum that is imprisoned inside her body and fills her with an otherworldly hunger for human flesh.

ZINN A mysterious, primordial Monstrum of tremendous power that shares Maika's body and mind, and fights her for control. Once considered a god, and drawn into this world by the Shaman-Empress, this Monstrum is driven by a deadly hunger, consuming the lives of humans and Arcanics alike, leaving only their desiccated corpses behind. Though it may give the impression that its only wish is to survive, there's far more to this creature, and its desires, than meets the eye…

KIPPA An Arcanic fox girl saved from slavery by Maika. Innocent and optimistic, she is frightened by the Monstrum — but trusts Maika and will bravely defend her and others by rushing into battles too dangerous for a child.

TUYA: Maika's closest friend in the world, who has been with her since before the Battle of Constantine. Unbeknownst to Maika, she is also the Baroness of the Last Dusk, a high-level member of the Arcanic Dusk Court tasked with containing — or even destroying — Maika's power.

WARLORD: The Dawn Court's "Sword of the East," twin sister of Moriko Halfwolf, and Maika's aunt. Ruthless in her ambition, the Warlord's greatest desire is to unravel the mystery behind the destruction of Constantine. She believes the secrets of Constantine will protect the Arcanics in their impending war against the humans — but she does not realize that the answers she seeks lie within her young niece.

THE QUEEN OF WOLVES: Mother of Moriko and the Warlord, grandmother of Maika, and leader of the Dawn Court. The Wolf Queen is one of the most powerful Ancients, and she holds equally powerful secrets.

RAWWRR!!!

...FINALLY... THIS...IS THE FACE...I REMEMBER...

...YOUR HATE... IS THE TRUEST... THING ABOUT... YOU...

MOTHER! STOP!

FFT!

=GASP=

I'M YOUR DAUGHTER!

YOU DARE INTERFERE?!

BOOM!

TRAITOR!

WHAT -- *NNGH* -- HAS HAPPENED TO HER?!

I TOLD YOU, IT'S THAT POISON!

I WILL *NOT* BE DENIED!

...DENIED WHAT...?

...YOU TOOK...

...EVERY-THING...

NOT EVERYTHING. I WAS TOO MERCIFUL IN THE END.

...YOUR MERCY...

...IS LAUGHABLE...

CHOOM

CHOOM

FORGIVE ME.

HA HA HA.

GODDESS.

HOW SUCH A WEAKLING SPRANG FROM MY WOMB, I WILL NEVER KNOW.

...ENOUGH... WITH YOUR RANTING...

...THE VANITY... OF YOUR SPECIES...

...ARE YOU... NEVER SATISFIED...?

RWWAR!

ARE YOU SATISFIED, ZINN?

GAAAH! THERE'S TOO MANY!

FUCK! HOLD ON!

CHKK

SHOMP

CHOOM

CHOOM

I DON'T DESIRE YOUR HELP!

I DON'T CARE. ARCANICS NEED YOU.

I NEED YOU.

I CAN'T LET YOU DIE JUST YET.

HISSSS!

...CHILD...

...WE CANNOT ALLOW...

...OUR HEARTS...

...TO BREAK US...

YOU'RE RIGHT, ZINN.

HALFWOLF, RUN!

RAAAWRRRR!!

GODDESS...

HALFWOLF, HURRY, MY SHIELD WON'T HOLD!

HEH.

...STOP...

...NOT THE MASKS... REMEMBER THE LAST TIME...

...WE CANNOT HOLD...THE POWER...

WE HAVE TO TRY.

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HOLD US
RELEASE US
DREAM US
DESIRE US
BEGIN US
SING US
BECOME US
FIGHT US
LOVE US US
BEAR US

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THEIR PURPOSE IS NOT YET REVEALED.

THE UNION NOT YET COMPLETE.

OLD GODS, I SILENCE YOU.

...BELOVED...

...BELOVED...

YOU CANNOT HAVE THEM.

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...BELOVED...

SHUT UP AND FIGHT, ZINN.

CORVIN! MISS!

I'M COMING!

RAAAAAAAH!!!

AURUM.

=GASP=

MY DAUGHTER.

I SO ENJOY WHEN YOU SURPRISE ME.

YOU CREATE SO MANY... OPPORTUNITIES.

ONE DAY, PERHAPS, YOU'LL APPRECIATE *MY* SURPRISES JUST AS THOROUGHLY.

CLICK

THE HALFWOLF... SHE'S USING THE MASK... THE FRAGMENTS... ARE AWAKE...

...THE SONG... THE SONG... TELL ME WHOSE VOICE... YOU HEAR...

YIP YIP

THE INQUISITRIX! THE MOTHER SUPERIOR! WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM?

TSK. THEY'LL SHAKE IT OFF.

BUT THIS IS A *FASCINATING* TURN.

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHAT HAS AWAKENED INSIDE THIS BOX.

...THE GREAT MASK...

...CURSE THE SHAMAN-EMPRESS...

...THAT IS OUR BIRTH-RIGHT...

I'LL TEAR IT FROM YOU.

STAY BACK! LET THEM FIGHT!

WAKE UP, MOTHER!

REMEMBER YOURSELF!

I DO.

SVASHH

AND WHAT...

...GRANDMOTHER...

...WILL I TEAR FROM YOU?

ARRGH!

MISS!

YOU HAVE TO STOP!

NNGH!

CHOMP

RAWRR!

SHHRRIIIPP

...TASTES SO GOOD... YOUR BLOOD... GLOWS...EVERY DROP... BURNING...

GAH! I HEAL FASTER THAN YOUR TEETH!

...BURNING...

MAIKA!

...WHO... WHO ARE YOU...

MISS!

MISS! LISTEN TO ME!

IF YOU DON'T STOP, YOU'RE GOING TO KILL US ALL!

YOU'LL TEAR OPEN THE SKY!

...KIP...PA...?

GRAHHHRR!!

...KIP...PA...?

"FUCK."

I THOUGHT THE MASKS WOULD GIVE US MORE POWER.

...THEY DID... WE ARE NOT DEAD...

...BUT ITS POWER... IS TAINTED...

...A MIRACLE... WE HAVE NOT... BEEN OVER-WHELMED...

...YOU GLIMPSED... WHAT WAS... WAITING... FOR US...

...THE SHAMAN-EMPRESS MASTERED THIS MASK BEFORE, DIDN'T SHE?

...YES... BUT SHE WAS... THE BELOVED...

...THIS GAMBLE... IS WEAKENING... THE PRISON... OF MY KIND...

...AND WILL DESTROY... OTHER LIVES...

...WITHOUT EVEN... THE BENEFIT... OF FEEDING...

YES, WE MIGHT LOSE. IF IT'S NOT A LACK OF POWER, THEN IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE DISORGANIZED.

...DISORGANIZED...?

...SHE WILL DEFEAT US... BECAUSE WE ARE NOT... *WHOLE*...

...IT IS WHY... MY KIND... LOST... OUR WAR AGAINST THEM...

...WE... WERE DIVIDED...

...WE DID NOT TRUST...

...IT WAS... MY FAULT THEN... AND MY FAULT NOW...

...I HAVE NOT... BEEN GENTLE... I HAVE NOT... BEEN LOYAL...

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR WAR WITH THE ANCIENTS... BUT WITH ME, WHY WOULD YOU BE GENTLE? WHY WOULD I?

I BLAMED YOU FOR WHO I AM. AND YOU BLAMED ME FOR BEING A PRISONER.

BUT YOU DIDN'T MAKE ME.

JUST LIKE I WASN'T THE ONE WHO TIED YOU TO MY BLOOD.

...I SPEAK OF TRUST...

...BUT I FEAR TRUST...

...I FEAR... HOW I WILL CHANGE...

FUCK, ZINN.

CAN IT BE ANY WORSE THAN WHO WE ARE NOW?

BESIDES, SOME THINGS WON'T CHANGE.

LIKE HOW I WOULD GIVE MY LIFE FOR THAT GIRL.

THE SAME WAY I'D GIVE MY LIFE FOR YOU.

...THEN LET US SAVE...THE CHILD...

...WITH THAT ONE ACT...WE BEGIN...

NO.

=KOFF=
=KOFF=

KIPPA.

YAY!

AND YOU DIDN'T KILL US!

YOU'LL NEVER STOP RUNNING TOWARD DANGER, WILL YOU?

YOU *NEEDED* ME, MISS.

WHAT HAVE YOU BECOME?

I DON'T KNOW YET.

=GASP=

I... I --

AIEE!

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TUYA, ARE YOU HURT?!

N-NO. I DON'T THINK SO.

YOU'RE SAFE. DON'T BE AFRAID...

IT'S JUST ME.

MAIKA --

NO. DON'T TELL ME WHY.

TO BE CONTINUED...

MONSTRESS FAN ART

Send letters & fan art to:
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#monstress on Twitter and Instagram!

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MONSTRESS™ ISSUE 34

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